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Viewing cable 06MANAGUA1434, NICARAGUA: COMMENTS ON NIC WATCH LIST OF INTERNAL

If you are new to these pages, please read an introduction on the [structure of a cable](#) as well as how to [discuss them](#) with others. See also the [FAQs](#)

Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#06MANAGUA1434**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
06MANAGUA1434	2006-07-03 17:52	2011-08-30 01:44	SECRET//NOFORN	Embassy Managua

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758456.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758467.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758468.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758464.aspx>
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<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4102/estrada-y-la-ldquo-doble-cara-rdquo-ante-ee-uu>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3966/la-ldquo-injerencia-rdquo-de-ee-uu-en-el-2006>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-23/Mundo/Relacionados/Mundo2758764.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-23/Mundo/NotaPrincipal/Mundo2758753.aspx>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4041/millones-de-dolares-sin-control-y-a-discrecion>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4040/la-ldquo-injerencia-rdquo-de-venezuela-en-2006>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4047/rodrigo-barreto-enviado-de-ldquo-vacaciones-rdquo>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2757239.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/NotaPrincipal/Mundo2746658.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/Relacionados/Mundo2757244.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/Relacionados/Mundo2746673.aspx>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3991/dra-yadira-centeno-desmiente-cable-diplomatico-eeuu>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3968/pellas-pronostico-a-eeuu-victoria-de-ortega-en-2006>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3967/barreto-era-ldquo-fuente-confiable-rdquo-para-eeuu>

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INFO RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 0722
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC

S E C R E T MANAGUA 001434

SIPDIS

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DEPT FOR S/CRS: BRENDA HAZZARD, WHA/CEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/03/2026
TAGS: [KDEM](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [NU](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#)
SUBJECT: NICARAGUA: COMMENTS ON NIC WATCH LIST OF INTERNAL
INSTABILITY

REF: STATE 94960

Classified By: Ambassador Paul A. Trivelli. Reasons 1.4 (B,D).

¶1. (S/NF) Post concurs with the bulk of the NIC Watch list's assessment of internal instability in Nicaragua. However, we recommend that the following clarifications and recent political developments be considered:

CALL FOR A PUBLIC REFERENDUM ON CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS
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¶2. (S/NF) Post notes that not only President Bolanos, but also a number of pro-democratic presidential candidates and their parties/alliances, have called for the referendum on the so-called constitutional reforms (setbacks, really), which once in effect on January 20, 2007, will further erode the Executive's powers. Indeed, Eduardo Montealegre's Liberal Nicaraguan Alliance-Conservative Party caucus (ALN-PC) was the first to call for the referendum. Daniel Ortega's FSLN opposes the referendum, while recently Liberal Constitutional Party (PLC) presidential candidate Jose Rizo has endorsed it. It is unclear whether PLC strongman Arnoldo Aleman would in fact support the referendum measure, should it create tensions with the FSLN. The issue of National Assembly approval is not that debating it would revive inter-party hostilities; these hostilities are already active and we can expect them to increase in the lead up to the November 5 election, referendum or not. Rather, debate continues over whether the Assembly's call for a referendum requires 47 votes or 56 votes; the latter is unobtainable without the FSLN votes.

¶3. (S/NF) If the Assembly does not call for a referendum, it could become a campaign issue, and voter preferences may reflect their views on the issue. There is also the possibility that the OAS may broker an agreement with the GON and the National Assembly to postpone the constitutional changes until a much later date and perhaps broaden the debate to other issues in a constitutional assembly.

REMITTANCES, MCA, CAFTA
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¶4. (S/NF) Post believes that the inputs of remittances, Millennium Challenge Account (MCA), and Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA "could," not/not necessarily "will," have a significant stabilizing effect over the next two years. Much will depend on the policies of the new government.

EFFORTS TO UNITE ANTI-FSLN FORCES/POSSIBLE ORTEGA VICTORY

15. (S/NF) Efforts to unite Liberals behind a single presidential ticket have failed. On May 31, PLC presidential candidate Jose Rizo jettisoned his earlier inclination to withdraw his candidacy and join Eduardo Montealegre if PLC caudillo Arnoldo Aleman and the party's leadership did not remove undesirable National Assembly candidates and the Aleman family refused to end its hegemony over the party. Five presidential candidates and their respective legislative slates are registered to run in the November 5 elections: Herty Lewites (MRS, FSLN dissident/anti-Ortega); Eden Pastora (Alternativa por El Cambio, also likely to appeal to some Sandinista voters); Daniel Ortega (FSLN); Jose Rizo (PLC); and Eduardo Montealegre (ALN). A possibility still exists, however, that if Rizo fails to climb in the polls, he could withdraw from the race in September or October and back Montealegre.

16. (S/NF) Regarding a possible Ortega victory, at this stage it does appear unlikely that he could win on the first round, and in a second round Ortega would probably lose. However, given Ortega's party's control over the Supreme Electoral Council and the courts and a five-candidate race, if Ortega stole 3% to 5% of the votes, he could obtain enough votes to win on the first round (according to Nicaraguan electoral law, a candidate requires 35% of the vote with a 5% advantage over the closest competitor to win the election). An Ortega victory could not only result in significant capital flight and increased political factionalism, it could also hurt counternarcotics, counterterrorism, and mil-mil cooperation, and substantially increase concerns over Nicaragua's stock of 1,071 MANPADS.

EFFECTS OF THE ORTEGA-ALEMAN PACT ON THE ELECTORAL LANDSCAPE

17. (S/NF) Although Nicaragua enjoys inclusive suffrage, freedom of expression and organization, and associational autonomy, the country remains a quasi-democracy. Its long legacy of strongman-dominated ("caudillo"), authoritarian rule permeates its political culture, a culture where the rule of impunity, not rule of law, prevails. The Ortega-Aleman pact, dating from 1998, has virtually subjected all branches of government other than the Executive to Ortega's and Aleman's control and seriously eroded Executive authority. To stay out of jail, Aleman appears willing to cede his party and country to Daniel Ortega, possibly to the point of "allowing" Ortega to win the presidency in exchange for his freedom.

NARCO PRESENCE AND PROBLEMS

18. (S/NF) While Nicaragua's growing narcotrafficking problem along its Atlantic Coast draws the most attention, its Pacific coastline has also experienced an increase in narcotrafficking and related problems. Certainly inadequate law enforcement contributes to the problem; however, Nicaragua's judiciary is equally, if not more, at fault. The courts routinely release narcotraffickers and money launders.

VULNERABILITY TO NATURAL DISASTERS

19. (U) In addition to Nicaragua's vulnerability to earthquakes, it is also prone to devastating hurricanes and occasional volcanic eruption.

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